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ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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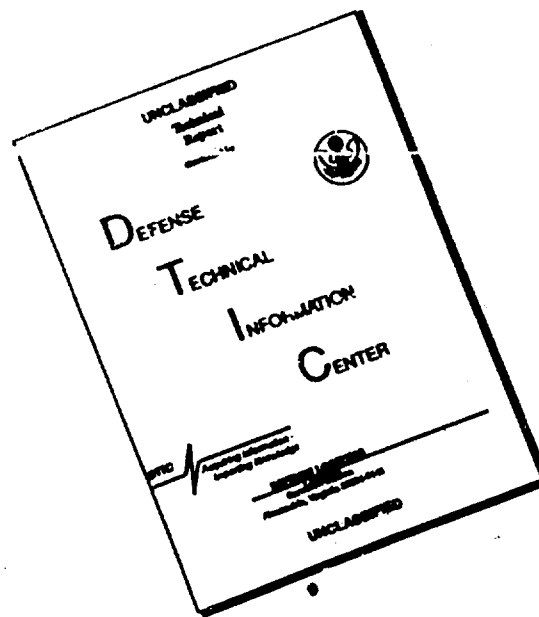
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THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF STUDENT ACTIVISM
ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*
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Any effort to interpret the revival of student activism in recent

years is faced with the fact that we are dealing with a worldwide

phenomenon. Wherever we look, at stagnant underdeveloped countries

like Indonesia, at rapidly expanding economically successful ones

like Japan, at right-wing dictatorships like Spain, at Communist

systems such as Czechoslovakia and Poland, and in such western demo-

cracies as Germany, France, Italy, and the United States, we find

aggressive student movements, which challenge their governments for

not living up to different sets of social ideals.

These movements all appear to have in common confrontation with

authority, some at least exhibit a readiness to take to the streets if

necessary. And far from being in contradiction to the environment of

student life it can be argued that these manifestations are often

acutely a product of it. Many suggested explanations have been specific

to their time and place. Germans have pointed to the decline in in-

stitutionalized opposition following the Great Coalition of the two

big political parties, or the coming of age of a student generation

who are the grandchildren of the Nazi generation, hence able to directly

attack the German past without talking about the behavior of their own

parents. French, Italians, and Germans have pointed to the inability

of a highly traditionalist, almost feudal university structure to adapt to the needs of a rapidly expanding system. The London School of Economics, the center of British student protest, blew up against the appointment of a Director who was (falsely) charged with having been involved in sponsoring segregated institutions in Rhodesia. The Berkeley revolt was a reaction to administrative measures which seemingly restricted the political rights of civil rights activists. But given the widespread character of student activism, the special circumstances of the university system in given countries, or the nature of the initiating event, can have been no more than aggravating factors. The sparks set off fires which were ready to go off.

Some have suggested that student tension reflects the lack of student participation in the affairs of the university, that some aspect of student power would reduce the potential for strong confrontation tactics, that if students felt they could communicate effectively to university authorities, they would limit the expression of their demands to legitimate conventional channels. While there can be little doubt that this has some validity, one must also point to the fact that the one university in Germany in which students have been represented on the Senate and other organs, the Free University of Berlin, is the Berkeley of West Germany. It is the school in which the greatest and most aggressive student movement was organized, and the German student movement in general stems from the Berlin protests. Similarly, co-government in many Latin American countries has not made for a cooperative or institutionally responsible student movement. Many analysts of the Latin American university have in fact argued that

the political representatives of the students tend to be institutionally irresponsible, e.g., by bringing politics into faculty appointments and often resisting efforts to improve the institution academically.

The view that student protest is causally related to large size and bureaucratization, to impersonality, lack of contact with professors, also is probably valid to some degree, yet it is insufficient. Studies of attitudes of American students, for example, do show that in large state universi:ies students are more dissatisfied with the quality of their education and student life than those at small private ones, but this is not the whole story. A survey of the attitudes of students at the major first-rate large state universities, such as Berkeley in California, Madison in Wisconsin, or Ann Arbor in Michigan, which have been among the leading centers of activism, indicate approval on the whole towards the quality of their education. These schools receive many transfers from first-rate small private schools. Berkeley studies at the time of the protest showed no relationship between attitudes toward the school as an educational institution and involvement in the movement. On the other hand, a number of private small elite U. S. institutions, such as Reed, Brandeis, Antioch, Oberlin, Swarthmore, Haverford, and Chicago, have been strongholds of political activism, at times including resistance to the school administration itself. In Britain, most recently, students at both Oxford and Cambridge have shown a readiness to engage in rough demonstrations against national political leaders.

In citing these cases, it is not suggested that the attempts to relate student unrest to such things as actual structural grievances,

bad political rules, inadequate channels of communication, bureaucracy
and impersonality, lack of involvement in the decisionmaking process,
inadequate instruction, are wrong. They are not, but it is important
to recognize that these internal sources of grievance cannot come
close to accounti.ig for the presence of large numbers of political
activists, and certainly do not explain the current spread of the out-
breaks.

Essentially the sources of political activism among students must
be found in politics, in the factors associated with different types
of politics. The explanations for more political activism at one time
rather than another must also be found on a political level, in the
sources of variations in political response.

Students as a stratum are more responsive to political trends,
to changes in mood, to opportunities for action than almost any other
group in the population, except possibly intellectuals. As a result,
students have played a major role in stimulating unrest and fostering
change in many countries. The special role of students has been
particularly noted in the Revolution of 1848 in Europe, in the Russian
revolutionary movement, which was largely a student one until 1905,
in the various Chinese movements during the twentieth century, and
in a host of underdeveloped states; in Latin America from World War I
on, and in much of Asia and Africa, both during the colonial period
and since independence.

Although it may be argued that student activism is the result,
rather than the cause of social discontent, it is important to recog-
nize that once activated, student groups have played a major role in

mobilizing public opinion behind the causes and ideologies fostered
by them. Social unrest causes student unrest, but once they start
expressing their disquiet, students and intellectuals have been in
many ways the vanguard of revolution.

They are among the most articulate segments of society and there-
fore able to communicate their opinions to other segments. Thus, in
Czarist Russia, it was student groups which organized workers and pea-
sants against the regime. The first members of many revolutionary
parties were recruited from student movements in many countries. In
Communist Poland and Czechoslovakia, student movements supported by
intellectuals initiated the process which led to a break in the totali-
tarian regimes. In the Soviet Union today, these groups constitute
the principal source of opposition. In the United States, the campus-
based anti-war movement has been responsible for the eventual growth
of large-scale opposition to the Vietnam War. Senator Eugene McCarthy's
election campaign, which was heavily influential in Lyndon Johnson's
withdrawal as a candidate for reelection, would have been impossible
without widespread student participation and organization. In West
Germany, the "extra-parliamentary" student opposition has initiated
a process of extremist conflict on the left and right which might lead
to a break-up of the Great Coalition.

In general, then, one should learn to expect a sharp increase in
student activism in a society where for a variety of reasons accepted
political and social values are being questioned, in times particularly
when events are testing the viability of a regime and policy fail-
ures seem to question the legitimacy of social and economic arrange-
ments and institutions. And mere observation shows that in societies

where rapid change, instability, or weak legitimacy of political in-
stitutions is endemic, there is what looks like almost constant turmoil
among students. Indonesia, before the fall of Sukarno and for two years
after it, is a clear example.

The Past Directions of Student Politics

From a historical point of view it would be erroneous to suggest
that student political activism had had a consistent orientation. In
large measure, student and other youth groups tend to differ from adult
political organizations by their emphasis on what what Max Weber has
called "the ethic of absolute ends" as contrasted with "the ethic of
responsibility." That is, youth tend to take the values which they
have been taught in absolute ways and hold up existing institutions
to criticism because they do not meet the pure ideals of the social
system, or of the subgroup of which the youth are a part. The notion
of ethic of responsibility involves concern for the consequences of
action and the recognition that it may be necessary to compromise with
one's values in order to achieve whatever good is possible in the situ-
ation. Recognition of a need to compromise, to take up an ethic of
responsibility presumably is associated with increased age and experience,
which inures individuals to the fact that there are conflicting values
and role demands.

Absolute ends or values can take any form. They may be the values
of a church, of a political party, of a large society, or other specific
segment. Where there is some degree of consensus about the larger
values of a national system or the subgroup, one may expect to find
many youth questioning why there is deviation between these values and

the practice of the society. Thus, in communist society, many young people and particularly students have raised questions about the discrepancy between the agreed-on ideals of communism, such as equality and freedom, and the actual practice of the system. Similarly, in the United States, there is considerable consensus about the value of equality with respect to race relations. And youth here have questioned the discrepancy between this ideal and the actual practice of the society.

During the 19th century, the limited evidence on student political behavior in Europe would suggest that the politicized students on the whole supported the left position of the time. They were in favor of nationalism when that was an issue as in Italy, or in favor of increased democracy and freedom. To a considerable degree the political struggles were also linked to a conflict between traditional religion and its claim to dictate in the areas of science, and anti-clerical liberalism. Scholars and students concerned with science, including medical students, were on the left because of their opposition to the church's resistance to modern science. In Eastern Europe intellectuals and students tended to look upon their countries as backward as compared to the advanced cultures of the West, particularly the French, and one found the phenomenon of radical students denigrating the elites of their own society for being culturally backward. This meant among other things that students were found among the major activists in all the revolutionary movements, and that many of the revolutionary leaders were first recruited to their political activity as students.

There is some variation among nations as to whether student activity was identified with the left or the right, which is associated with the issue of whether nationalism was considered a leftist or rightist

phenomenon in given count-ies. In Germany, as a result of the fact
that nationalism became identified with Bismarck and the Prussian
monarchy, it became a conservative trait after 1870. And as might
be expected, many German intellectuals and students were nationalist
and right wing. In the Latin Catholic countries, the split between
clerical and anti-clerical elements, referred to earlier, meant that
those young people and intellectuals who were identified with religion
were conservative. They often formed the shock troops of right-wing
conservatism, being more idealistic about their conservatism than were
the older people.

More recently we find evidence of sharp divergencies in the poli-
tical orientations of students. Following World War I, the Italian
Fascist Movement had a strong appeal to many students in Italian
universities presumably based on its theme of the proletarian defeated
nation. The anthem of the Fascist Party was Giovenezza, "Youth." The
leadership of the party was extremely young, many of them were in their
twenties when it came to power. Of course, the left also had student
support. There is no evidence to differentiate the sources of the
appeal at that time. Fascist and right-wing groups had considerable
backing in various European universities during the Thirties. In Ger-
many, the Nazis were extremely strong in the technical universities,
that is the engineering and science schools. They also, however, had
a great deal of strength in the more liberal arts oriented universities,
particularly the more provincial ones, such as Kiel. In France, also,
there were strong Fascist student groups. Seemingly, the student
right-wing extremists were recruited from those elements in the popu-
lation which were right-wing.

In the underdeveloped and colonial countries during the 30's there were links between student activism and fascist or Nazi appeals. The fascist-Nazi ideology was directed internationally against British, American, French and Dutch imperialism. Nazi Germany was the aggressive anti-status-quo nation. The Nazis were ready to fund groups opposed to their international enemies. And one finds various groups with considerable student support, which were willing to take help from the Axis, and identify their nationalist ideology as pro-fascist in some countries in Latin America, in the Arab world, and to some extent in the Asian colonies of Britain . The pro-fascist movements in these countries differed considerably from those in Europe itself, since they were more totally revolutionary, seeking to overthrow either the ruling colonial power or the existing elites of the society. These pro-fascist youth groups met with resistance from various left-wing ones, which had also considerable strength in many underdeveloped countries. The right and left wing groupings, however, shared a common antipathy to foreign control.

Protest Since World War II in the Third and Communist Worlds

The rise of student protest movements since World War II has been more extensive and more important than in earlier periods. Students played a major role during the 1950's in overthrowing or weakening egimes in the underdeveloped and communist worlds. Thus, student movements were important in the revolts against Peron in Argentina in 1955, against Perez Jimenez in Venezuela in 1958, in different protest movements in South Korea and South Vietnam during the 1950's, in India, Japan, and many other countries. They helped initiate

liberalizing movements in Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and China
in 1955-56. During the 1960's, of course, student protest spread to
the developed countries of Europe and the United States.

These movements have a great deal in common in tactics and poli-
tical style. Student culture is a highly communicable one, the mood
and mode of it translate readily from one center to another, one
country to another. Yet it would be a mistake to try to interpret
the seeming phenomenon of a worldwide student revolt as a response to
common social conditions or as an effort to secure a common objective.
The sources of student protest must be differentiated among different
types of societies: underdeveloped systems, authoritarian regimes,
mainly Communist, and the developed democratic societies.

In various underdeveloped countries and new states of the third
world, the sources of intellectual and student protest may be found in
the wide gap which exists between the social outlook of the educated
younger part of the population and the more traditional less educated
older age groups. The gap between the social and political expectations
engendered within universities, and the reality of underdeveloped
societies motivates students and intellectuals to accept ideologies
which define the status quo as unacceptable and seek drastic institu-
tional changes so as to foster modernization, i.e., the values of the
"advanced" societies. This gap is reinforced by the fact that the very
logic of the university imposes values of achievement, competitive
standards of merit, which are frequently in conflict with the tradi-
tional, particularistic values both of the controlling elite and the popu-
lation at large. Thus, the intellectuals and students of eastern Europe in
the 19th century rejected the institutions of their own societies as backward

compared to those of France and Britain. Chinese "returned students"
in the early years of this century favored the overthrow of the back-
ward Manchu dynasty so as to catch up to the West.

Although the principal source of ideological tensions within
such societies involves the conflict between "modern" and "traditional"
values, a conflict which opinion surveys suggest is largely linked to
differences in education and age, such differences are often tied to
positions on international issues. In much of the underdeveloped
world the opposition to existing domestic elites and social-cultural-
economic systems for being involved in and responsible for national
backwardness is accompanied by support for the communist model as an
example of a successful effort to break through the restrictions on
development and modernization. Since the existing social system is
often allied internationally with the United States, the student oppo-
sition movements tend to associate the symbols of the United States,
capitalism, the free world, with the conservative elites of their own
society. Opposition to domestic traditionalism and liberalism becomes
translated into support for some form of leftism which in international
terms means opposition to the United States. Hence, in large measure,
leftist student activism in most of the underdeveloped world is a force
against any alignment with the United States. It is, however, not
necessarily a force for support of the Soviet Union.

The leftist student groups differ considerably from country to
country, and in recent years there has been an increasing growth of
"third force" revolutionary organizations which are both anti-American
and anti-Soviet. Some tend to be Maoist, others identify in a very

loose way with Trotskyism, a few are explicitly anarchist. There is

an increasing tendency to take over a variant of what has come to be

known as the new left ideology, that is opposition to all power groups.

But regardless of the differences among the leftists, there can be

little question that the focus of their hostility in international terms

is the United States. This opposition has become intensified with the

escalation of the Vietnamese War since 1964. In large measure oppo-

sition to American intervention in Vietnam has become the predominant

political issue of many of the left-wing groups.

There is one major variation among the different underdeveloped

countries which relates to the image and role of the governing power,

i.e., whether it is viewed as leftist or not. The political movements

of students in countries which are aligned to the Soviet Bloc have

often opposed Soviet policy.

Two outstanding examples of this phenomenon occurred in Indonesia

under Sukarno and in Ghana under Nkhrumah. In both of these countries

led by pro-communist leaders, the students took a position in opposition

to the regime arguing in favor of increased liberty within the univer-

sities and political life generally. Their advocacy of greater freedom

and their criticism of various actions of the regime led them to foster

the ideologies of democracy and certain kinds of liberalism. In a

sense, the general proposition may be advanced that the most activist

student groups tend to be opposed to the existing regime, and conse-

quently take on a political ideology in opposition to it. The situation

in the various communist countries is, of course, a case in point.

Where student activism has developed in communist societies it is cri-

tical of the existing regime as oppressive and also critical of its

international orientation. To some degree in Eastern Europe, the
oppositionist students have favored withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact,
have shown signs of being pro-Western, and in the last year have
taken up the issue of Communist-Israeli relations as a symbolic one.
The students in Poland and Czechoslovakia have been strongly in favor
of Israel.

The sources of the tensions between the regime and the university
and intellectual life which are conducive to student activism in Com-
munist countries are somewhat different from those in the third world.
As in the underdeveloped countries, there is an inherent gap between
some norms which are an aspect of university and intellectual life,
namely, academic and intellectual freedom, and the structure of society.
Intellectual and scientific life requires freedom. To simply mouth
party truth, or to limit the problems which one studies or the conclu-
sions which one reaches, to those which are authorized by the regime
places a basic strain on intellectual activity. Lenin and the Bolshe-
viks, of course, distrusted intellectuals precisely for this reason.
It is antithetical for an intellectual to simply be a publicist or
spokesman for a given system. Intellectuals place a premium on origi-
nality as a source of status, and originality means rejecting the
verities of the present and past. Hence there is a predisposition
among those involved in the world of the intellect, whether inside
or outside of the university, to resist authority on such issues, a
strain which becomes manifest during periods of crises. One of the
most dramatic examples of the strength of such values among intellec-
tuals and students under communism surfaced during the brief "hundred

flowers bloom" period in China in 1956. The relaxation of controls
by the Maoist regime produced a sudden outburst of critical speeches
and statements on the campuses of the country which denounced the
government for inhibiting free speech, research, and teaching, and
for maintaining an absolutist state. Many of these criticisms pointed
to Titoist Yugoslavia as an example of a Communist state which supposedly
allowed freedom and which followed an independent policy with respect
to the Soviet Union.

Improvements, i.e., a relaxation of controls, serve often to
stimulate increased criticism of the system among those who take the
values of freedom seriously. For new generations of eastern European
(or Spanish) university students, the fact that there is more freedom
than in Stalin's day, or than three years ago, is an ineffective argu-
ment. They only know that the present system is not free, that the
present rulers are repressive even if they happen to be men who pressed
for more freedom a few years earlier. Thus, once the issue of freedom
is joined in authoritarian states, we may expect students and intel-
lectuals to fight to drop the existing restrictions, a struggle which
can lead either to greater liberalization, or a return to absolutist
controls, i.e., a move in the Czech or the Polish direction.

Student Protest in the Developed Democracies -- The United States and Europe

On the basis of the analyses of the sources of intellectual and
student protest in the third and Communist worlds, it would seem that
radical student activism should occur less frequently and be less
prevalent in the developed democracies of Europe and the English-
speaking states. Since modern industrial societies are largely

characterized by their support for a universalistic ethics of merit, of freedom, and of scientific and intellectual creativity and originality, there should be diminished tension between the values of the world of intellect and the larger society. This would be true even recognizing that the universities still place a greater emphasis on egalitarianism and the free competition of ideas than do other institutions. It is worth making the point initially that the current wave of student unrest in the United States arose as a response to the one issue, race relations, in which the United States has retained an aspect of pre-modern traditional caste values, which are basically at odds with the norms of a democratic industrial society. Anti-imperialism, that is, opposition to colonial rule, is another example of student identification with the explicit values of democratic society against its own practices. Previous to the emergence of American student protest, the largest upheaval in the western world was occasioned by French student support for the FLN in the Algerian War. The protest against the Algerian War involved many thousands of students, who engaged in fairly drastic measures to sabotage the war effort.

There is, however, another source of the tension between intellectuals and modern society, which though not new, is one which has only recently been recognized as a source of political resentment. It involves opposition to the trend toward the growth of hard social science and expertise, the decline of diffuse intellectualism in the social arena. The differentiation of social science knowledge into distinct fields of technical expertise has sharply undermined the role of the humanist intellectual who has traditionally claimed the right to comment on and influence public policy. This phenomenon may be seen most strikingly

in economics. Economists now contend that many of the decisions about
economic policy require technical knowledge beyond the competence of
the informed layman. And as the other social sciences have extended
their spheres of competence, and have become more systematically em-
pirical and quantitative, they also question the ability of laymen to
understand the factors which affect educational achievement, child-
rearing practices, international relations, and the like.

Increasingly, the expert tells the general intellectual that the
particular matters under discussion are simply too complicated, too
technical, for them to be influenced through advocacy of relatively
uncomplicated solutions associated with a particular ideological
bent. Those who seek to reform society in some specific way find
themselves up against arguments supposedly derivative from specialized
scholarly knowledge. And commitment to the increasing importance of
social science and specialization reinforces the ideology of the "end
of ideology," i.e., the position that ideologically dictated positions
are basically irrelevant, a position which was put strongly in John F.
Kennedy's speech at Yale in the spring of 1963.

These trends have contributed to the rise among left intellectuals
and students of a kind of "intellectual Poujadism," a back-lash
opposition to systematic and quantitative social science, to large
scale social research, to the very conception of the utility of efforts
at value-free objective scholarship in policy relevant fields. Many
intellectuals react to the emphasis on social science and the concom-
itant belief in gradualism, expertise, and planning with a populist
stress on the virtues of direct action against evil institutions and
practices. They attack the involvement of the university in policy

matters as inherently corrupting the values of pure scholarship and
intellectual freedom.

Studies of the sources of leftist activities within universities
indicate that the humanities and softer social sciences contribute
disproportionately. (Parenthetically, it should also be mentioned
that those scholars who are in the theoretical or pure mathematical
disciplines also tend to support the left. Mathematicians, statisti-
cians, theoretical physicists, molecular biologists, and the like
seemingly are disposed to attack going complex social systems for not
working efficiently, according to the logic of an abstract moral model.)

The intellectual Poujadist reaction is, of course, related to a
much older and continuing source of conflict between intellectuals
and the power structure. This is the tension between the patron or
consumer and the intellectuals. The latter tend to view work which
is oriented toward the demands of the market place, rather than to
the intrinsic logic of creativity as corrupt. Such criticism has taken
two forms, a conservative or rightist one which views democracy as a
mass society in which intellectual elites are pressed to conform to the
low taste of the public, and a leftist one which sees the source of the
corruption in the power held by those who buy and distribute intellectual
products, i.e., business or government. The conservative critique has
in recent years been absorbed in many countries into the left-wing one.
The view that there is an inherent conflict between the values of in-
tellectuals and those of the market-place has sustained an anti-capitalist
ideology among many humanistically inclined intellectuals, one which also
affects students preparing for such pursuits.

The general discussion of some of the bases of tensions between intellectuals, students, and the social systems of the developed democracies does not, of course, explain why after a two decade long period of relative inactivity and acquiescence, a new left student and intellectual opposition should have arisen in many western countries. To understand this phenomenon, I believe that it is necessary to emphasize the effects of the changing international picture.

Roughly speaking from 1940 until some time after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Western World was subject to considerable concern about the expansionist tendencies of totalitarian regimes, first the fascist ones and later the communist states. Concentration on resistence to these expansionist societies had two ideological consequences. First, it became necessary to defend the virtues of democratic systems against totalitarian critiques, both of the fascist and communist varieties. This put a heavy premium on intellectuals justifying the virtues of the societies in which they lived and defined serious criticism as contributing to the enemy. Second, it led to a general acceptance of the worth of some form of collective security and international cooperation as the means of resisting totalitarian expansion.

These developments contributed to a decline in ideological controversy within the democratic camp in Western Europe. The celebrated discussion and formulation of a concept of "the end of ideology" emerged out of an important symbolic event, a large meeting in Milan of intellectuals from all over the democratic world, sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom in September 1955. At this meeting, which was attended by intellectuals from all political camps ranging from left-wing socialists to conservatives, a real consensus seemed

to emerge directed against communism. The anti-communist consensus
led to a deprecation of the cleavages among the different groups in
the West. Many who wrote about the end of ideology during the next
year or so were present at this conference and were struck by the de-
gree of ideological consensus.

From 1956 on, however, much of the political rationale for domestic
consensus based on international anti-communism began to disappear.
The emergence of visible tensions within the communist world, the
opposition that surfaced in Russia after Khrushchev's speech about
Stalinism, the protest movements in Poland, Hungary, and other com-
munist states, sharply reduced the image of a threatening monolithic
totalitarian communism. Communism, in fact, was liberalizing, was
subject to internal divisions, and was not unified internationally.
The split with China pointed up the fact that international communism
had ceased being a system defined by the concept of Stalinism. And
conversely within the communist world itself the idea of capitalist
encirclement, that the Soviet Union or other Communist States might
be attacked from without, declined considerably.

These changes in the image of the opposition social system resulted
in an increasing generation gap on both sides. The generation of
western leaders whose political orientations had been formed during
the international conflicts with fascism and Stalinism continued to
see a commitment to collective security as a basic prerequisite for
a peaceful world. For the generations coming of age after the Hungarian
Revolution and perhaps even more importantly after the building of the
Berlin Wall in 1961, the assumptions about totalitarian society and its

expansionist and war-making potential did not correspond to the reality which they witnessed.

The differences particularly affected reactions to the Vietnam War. From the point of view of the older generations who dominate policy in the United States and other countries Vietnam may be regarded as the latest battle or event in a twenty-year war which began in 1948 or earlier. The newer generations, however, refused to accept the view that communism is inherently expansionist. Clearly Hanoi and the Viet Cong are not puppets of a unified communist world movement.

Since the idea of an imperialist communist enemy was no longer viable, there was no longer any need to inhibit criticism of the evils, social inequities, or bad policies of one's own society. The international strains which had contributed to a decline in ideological controversy and in sharp domestic criticism by intellectuals and students began to disappear.

In a sense, during the 60's the western world has returned to a more "normal" or peaceful social environment, in which the main focus of intellectual and student politics has been able to return to the domestic scene. The domestic system, including the educational system itself, is held up to criticism for not living up to the ideals fostered by the society. This process has become increasingly evident on both sides of the curtain. The rise of a critical intelligensia and a new left student body in the west is one reflection of the change.

The current political scene increasingly resembles that which existed before World War I. In that earlier age, the mood of liberals and progressives about social change was generally optimistic. In

spite of the fact that the socialist movements campaigned against the possibility of international war, there was no real expectation that the prolonged period of peace, economic growth, and the expansion of democracy dating from the 1870's would end. Rather as the economic situation improved, the left, socialist, anarchist, and progressive forces continued to grow, and intellectuals criticized their domestic systems for various internal inequities and inequalities. The first student socialist movements in the United States, Germany, and France date from the period 1900 to 1914.

It may also be worth noting in this connection that students and intellectuals were involved in highly visible activist opposition movements in the underdeveloped countries, particularly in Latin America and parts of Asia, during the 1950's, long before the emergence of university based opposition movements in the developed states. Anti-Communism and cold war ideologies were much weaker in these states. Hence they were less subject to ideological constraints on their propensities to attack the status quo in society or university.

The Content of Student Activism

The growth in student opposition during the 60's is in large measure identified with a left-wing critique of the social welfare planning state in the Western democracies. The available data on the backgrounds of student activists in a number of countries suggest that many of them, particularly the leaders, are the children of relatively affluent, liberal left-wing parents. They have been reared in progressive households to accept the ideology of equality, democracy, helping the poor, and the like. Their parents represent a generation that was pushed to

the left by the events of the depression and the anti-fascist conflict.
Right-wing radical critiques of the existing society have to a certain
extent been outmoded by the discrediting of fascist doctrines and the
reduction of right extreme movements to forms of Poujadism based on
the outlying provincial declining areas of different societies. The
politicized university students have the values of modern egalitarian
democracy. That small minority of them which are impelled to be acti-
vists have concentrated the fire of their attack on domestic ills.

This domestic concentration, however, has resulted in foreign
policy terms in a criticism of international collective security anti-
communist alignments as out-moded and unjustified. The new left is
sympathetic to movements in other countries seeking social change in
an egalitarian direction which means, in the underdeveloped world,
communist or pro-communist movements of the Castro, Viet Cong, Maoist
varieties. Since the United States can obviously be identified as a
force seeking to maintain the status quo in the underdeveloped countries,
as well as a source of support for the conservative social system of
their own country, the student left, as noted earlier, is inherently
sharply anti-American and against the American alliances. It
simply does not accept the underlying theses which justify both
alliances such as NATO and SEATO, and the opposition to revolutionary
pro-communist movements.

The Vietnam War with direct armed conflict and intervention by
the United States has, of course, exacerbated the extent of the oppo-
sition to the U. S. The common theme justifying alliances among the
student left in different countries has been opposition to American

foreign policy. This fact, however, should not lead us to underestimate the extent to which these movements are really primarily domestically oriented or directed against local power structures and universities and the political parties and culture. These are the revolts of activist youth against the older generation in power in their own country. They have the effect, however, of also being a revolt against the system of international alliances and against America's role in the world.

In the Eastern Bloc countries, of course, as noted earlier, these revolts are directed to some considerable degree against the system of alliances among the communist countries. There the alliance is also a power system in that the Soviet Union keeps control over other countries through it. But basically youth on both sides of the curtain are seeking to reform or revolutionize their own societies and they are opposing the main power to which their country is linked which they see as a source of support for the status quo at home and abroad. In short, it is the fact that the cold war has declined, that the basis for the system of alliances is no longer as strong as it once was, that has made a new international youth movement possible.

The movement of the 60's differs in a number of significant ways from earlier student movements. As compared to the previous ones, it has almost no relationship to adult organizations. Student and youthful leftist groups, before World War I or during the inter-war period before World War II, were to a large extent the youth or student affiliates of adult political parties. They usually were more extreme in their ideology than the adult organizations, but essentially their conception of how to get social change in their country was through

their adult party coming into power or increasing its influence. This
meant that the primary tasks of the youth group were to recruit support
and train leaders for the adult organization, and also to provide the
mass base for demonstrations. Insofar as the adult groups were in-
volved in parliamentary activities and tactics, the student groups
were as well.

This pattern may still be seen today in the activities of the young
Communists in various countries, that is the youth or student sections
of the pro-Russian Communist parties. In the West and in many under-
developed countries, the pro-Russian Communists tend, where possible,
to rely on the use of parliamentary and pressure-group tactics. Their
student groups also follow the same procedures, essentially the tradi-
tional legal methods of demonstrating, striking, picketing, and the
like.

Most of the non-communist left-wing student movements in the underdeveloped
states of Latin America and Asia also retain an instrumental orientation
towards social change in their own country. That is, they believe in
the possibility of progressive social change through policies designed
to foster economic development, education, land reform, and political
democracy. To achieve these objectives, they favor placing a new
adult group in power. Similarly, the student activists in eastern
Europe are concerned with concrete reforms, usually of a political
nature.

The student left of the western democracies, however, is in a
post-reformist phase. The new left youth groups reject almost all
political parties. For them the political parties of the left, both

Socialist and Communist, are parties of the parliamentary establishment. They identify these groups as supporters of the domestic or foreign, i.e., Russian, status quo. They see no adult organizations which are genuinely revolutionary, which are genuinely resistant to the major trends of the society which they oppose. Hence there is now an international revolutionary movement of students and youth which expresses in almost pure unadulterated form the ethic of absolute ends. They are almost completely uninhibited and uncontrolled, since they have no relations to parties and organizations which have some sort of interest in adhering to the rules of the game and which accept the need for compromise. Their politics is expressive ratner than instrumental. The new left groups also have no clear concept of any road to power, of a way of effecting major social change. They are ready and willing to use tactics which violate the normal democratic game.

The story of how they developed the confrontationist tactics of civil disobedience in the current period, of course, derives directly from American experience. The American student movement first emerged out of the civil rights activities in the South. And the Southern movement developed the tactics of sit-ins and other forms of civil disobedience as the only way to resist the coercive illegal tactics of the Southern white segregationists who controlled the police and the courts. These tactics of sit-ins and civil disobedience spread to the North and have been used effectively particularly in battles within universities which are unable to resist them. Since Berkeley in 1964 they have spread to Europe and other parts of the world.

Such tactics used by students are particularly effective since there are strong norms operative in most cultures against the use of violence

or strong force against students. The idea of university autonomy, that the police should not come on a campus, that students should not be arrested for deviant behavior, is a very strong one. Efforts to break up the student demonstrations, no matter how illegal, by the use of force, almost invariably lead the more moderate segments of the university community, both students and faculty alike, to join the student protesters against the police and have the effect of radicalizing them. Recognition of this fact, that protest which brings about police repression increases support for the radical position, has exacerbated the willingness of the student left to use such tactics. They are clearly effective.

The significance of the growth of student activism is also enhanced by the enormous increase in the numbers attending universities and the equivalents of junior colleges in various countries. The statistics of growth in countries like Italy, France, Germany, Britain, and the United States are literally fantastic. This growth has had at least two different important consequences. First it has meant that the absolute number of students has become much greater than it once was and hence that a relatively small percentage of the total student body, either on a given campus or nationally, can become a major force in absolute numbers. There are close to 200,000 students in Paris, so that ten per cent of them are the 20,000 who took part in the Paris demonstrations. There are over 400,000 students in Tokyo, so that a small proportion of them can make an impressive demonstration. There are 70,000 students registered at the University of Rome.

In brief, this growth means that even without a relative increase in the proportion of students committed to a left or activist position,

that the possibilities to wage impressive protests have increased.
Secondly, the increase in numbers of students has in many countries
led to a deterioration in their position in terms of the type of edu-
cation which they receive, their status in the society, and their ex-
pectation level after graduation. Many countries have expanded the
numbers of students, particularly in the humanities and social sciences,
without increasing the size of the faculty, or even in some countries,
accommodations or libraries. Hence we have some students subject to
a much greater degree of impersonality, to less attention from faculty.
Their generalized sense of insecurity which inherently flows from their
marginal position between dependence on parental family and future
independent position is greater than ever before. Students increas-
ingly lack a clear-cut sense of their personal future, of what kind of
job will be available to them after they graduate. To attend university
is no longer an elite activity. There is a greater objective basis
for student discontent about their situation as students. At the same
time it is easier than ever to mount large demonstrations. The
increasing pressures for university reform reinforce the sources of
concern for social reform.

Assuming a continuation of present trends, both international and
domestic, it may also be assumed that the phenomenon of student activism
is not a temporary one, although it should have peaks and declines.
Specific issues which enable the activist minority to mobilize strength
outside their own ranks will result in increases in the movement, but
such support will largely drift away as specific issues disappear or
lose salience.

One example of this phenomenon was the opposition to the Algerian
War in France. This opposition involved tens of thousands of students.
The movement was very much like the one in the United States today
against the Vietnam War. Once the war ended, however, in 1962, the
mass support for the French student movement almost totally collapsed.
It simply disappeared on many campuses. This event, of course, cannot
be separated from the general decline of political activity that occurred
under DeGaulle in the same period, but it does indicate the way in which
changing political events can affect the movement, that we are not
necessarily dealing with a secular pattern.

A somewhat similar development occurred in Britain in the late 50's.
The concept of a new left arose in Britain at this time; seemingly as
a reaction against both the Labour and Communist parties. The new
left youth and student movement which emerged in many of the universities
was largely concerned with cultural critiques of the larger society
rather than with demonstrations, although many of its members were also
involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The subsequent elec-
toral victory of the Labour Party under Harold Wilson, who was then
identified as a left-wing Laborite, sharply reduced the appeal of the
British new left, and it declined during the first few years of Labour
rule. It has since regained strength, in some part fostered by the im-
pression that the Wilson Labour government is a failure, that it is
conservative in practice.

1968 seems to be a new benchmark in the strength of the student
groups. The most important event has been the May revolt in France.
However, the German student movement engaged in widespread, relatively
violent demonstrations during Easter Week and has become a fairly potent

movement. Many Italian universities were closed down by prolonged
strikes during the spring. The issues of university reform and the
power of the student movement have become important in Italy as well.
In Belgium, the students at Louvain University, up in arms about the
language issue, played a major role in bringing down the Belgian govern-
ment In Eastern Europe also student protest has been important in
Poland and Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The Short-Term Effects of Student Activism

What will be the effect of this growing wave of student protest
on the politics of the respective countries? The answer clearly is
not a simple one. On one hand, the growing student movement is a force
pressing the moderate left and the communists to move further to the
left, to become more militant in order to secure the support of the
students. Many adult radicals have begun to identify with the student
movement, and this, too, presses on the left parties. Many student
demonstrations have been interpreted as reflecting the existence of
genuine grievances and various efforts are made to appease these con-
cerns, particularly by university reform, and occasionally other forms
of social reform.

On the other hand the irresponsibility of the student movements,
their willingness to rely on extra-parliamentary, illegal methods,
their proclamation that their goal is the revolutionary overthrow of
society, their resort to street violence, also may create a backlash
among the more moderate and conservative and established parts of the
electorate. Thus, in Germany, the student violence in April was credited
with sharply increasing the vote for the National Democratic Party, the

neo-Nazis, in the Baden Württemberg elections the end of April. In
those elections the moderate left Social Democrats lost heavily,
seemingly both to the right and left. In France, the student revolt
has had one obvious consequence; it has given France its first majority
party government in history, one which is right-wing. Thus, it may
be argued that student demonstrations strengthen the conservatives
within the body politic, that they help place conservatives in power
or increase their majority. Such contentions also have been made
about California politics and U. S. politics generally. The Berkeley
disturbances were credited with having played an important role in
electing Ronald Reagan in California.

The picture, of course, even in electoral terms, is not clear-cut.
In Italy, the 1968 elections did not produce a movement to the right,
rather if there was any change it was a slight shift to the left. On
the whole, however, the Italian case seems to be the exception. The
general effect of extra-parliamentary youth politics is to strengthen
the right, at least in the short run.

The strengthening of the right, therefore, may actually have the
effect of contributing to strengthening the foreign alliances with the
United States. Since the conservative parties, France apart, are the
more pro-American collective security oriented ones, this paradoxically
could have the opposite effect on what the students themselves are
striving for internationally. This outcome, however, is not a necessary
one.

The dominant political groups in various countries are concerned
with maintaining domestic tranquility. Consequently, they should be

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interested in reducing the size of opposition student movements, and
will try to avoid giving the activists any justification for engaging
in violence against the government. Many politicians see foreign policy
issues as a major source of annoyance for their students. Chancellor
Kiesinger has explicitly credited the Vietnamese War with being respon-
sible for the growth of a violent German student movement and for the
alienation of the German youth. Whether he is right or wrong is irre-
levant, what is important is that he sees it this way. In Japan, which
has witnessed a strong new left type student movement before the pheno-
menon occurred in the United States and Western Europe, student oppo-
sition to international alliances with the United States while not up-
setting them, has had the effect of reducing the public commitment
of the Japanese politicians to such alliances. The U. S. has with-
drawn forces to avoid student protests.

In evaluating the cost to the nation, or to the government and
political forces of a given international policy, those in power
currently must count as one of these costs an increase in street oppo-
sition to the government, a decline in respect to law and order. Should
the other forces pressing for maintenance of the alliance weaken, one
may therefore assume that the rise of a student movement will become
a force for isolationism. If a politician must choose between inter-
nationalism and isolationism and if he feels that the international
consequences of the choice have become less important, he may opt for
the isolationist course to gain domestic tranquility, to maintain law
and order, to reduce emotional opposition.

The continuation of the Vietnam War has, of course, made inter-
national relations a major source of emotional tension. For those

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opposed to the war, any alliance with the United States may be per-
ceived as an alliance with murderers, with those who are killing a
small country. In the absence of the war, the issue of whether a
given country remains part of NATO or has a mutual security treaty
with the United States still may remain an important issue for debate
and controversy, but presumably will not provoke as intense a set of
reactions.

Generation Differences - The Long Term Effects

In the long run, the most important effect of the current wave of
student activism on foreign policy may reflect the outcomes of dif-
ferences in outlook toward politics among different age groups or
generations. The experiences which have sustained a strong commit-
ment to the western alliances are an outgrowth of the struggles
against fascism and Stalinism. As noted earlier, Munich, the Hitler-
Stalin Pact, the 1948 Czech Coup, the Korean War, the Hungarian Revolu-
tion, are all ancient history to the generations which have come of age
during the 60's. Adults often find it hard to understand the extent
to which relatively recent events which occurred before a given group
of youth reached political and intellectual consciousness simply are
not salient to them.

A major consideration of the consequences of political events on
a society require the specification of the role of political gener-
ations. Many analysts of politics and cultural styles have stressed
the extent to which the concept of the generation must be used as an
independent analytical one. The thesis underlying this type of analysis
indicates that people tend to form a defined frame of reference in late

adolescence or early youth within which they fit subsequent experiences.
That is, the first formative political experiences are most important.

A number of scholars have attempted to trace through the partici-
pation of different generations in the politics of various nations.
They have pointed to the way that people who came of age during the
Great Depression have continued to react to issues of unemployment,
economic security, and the like, ever since. The Depression youth
are much more likely to be concerned about the welfare state than
earlier and subsequent generations. Similarly, as noted earlier,
many who were concerned in their youth with foreign policy issues
stemming from fascist or communist expansionism have continued to
react along lines stemming from such issues more recently. It is
easy to visualize how such processes operate. A small increase in
the current unemployment rate will shock someone who has experienced
the Depression, while it might not even be noticed by someone who
has not. An indication that the Soviet Union might be considering
military action in Czechoslovakia will concern those who remember
the Czech Coup or the Hungarian Revolution as a major experience of
their political youth much more than those who did not. A generation
also may be somewhat more conservative or somewhat more leftist than
preceding or later ones because of the climate of politics when it
entered. Presumably the generation who came to consciousness in the
United States during the 1950's is more conservative than subsequent
ones. The events which surround the entry of a generation into politics
may continue to have their impact on national life for many decades
after these events are forgotten as topics of political discussion.

In foreign policy terms, the United States apparently created an isolationist generation out of the events of World War I and the immediate years therafter. This generation as it grew older, remembering the way it had been "fooled" in World War I, resisted steps toward intervention during the 1930's. Conversely, however, the young people of the latter 1930's and early 1940's learned that isolationism and neutralism had led to the rise of fascism and World War II. They presumably have shown up as a much more interventionist group.

To a considerable extent, the contemporary political leaders of the United States and many other Western countries are people who came to political consciousness at a time when foreign policy issues involving the containment of fascism or communism were most salient. This generation of political leaders and their supporters do not need much convincing to react militantly to communist threats. In this connection it may be important to point out that the U.S. Government did not feel it necessary to justify the decisions concerning Vietnam taken by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, by exposing the domestic inequities of North Vietnam regime, its use of force against its own people, or of the terror tactics of the Viet Cong.

This policy was dictated in part by the desire of each administration to keep the U. S. role in Vietnam as limited as necessary to prevent a Communist takeover in the south, to restrain the pressure of the "hawks" who sought to escalate the war, and thus to risk its widening far beyond the borders of Vietnam. But the reluctance to undertake any significant propaganda campaign in support of the war was also in some part a reflection of the fact that, to those older men in charge of our information

policy, there seemed to be no need for elaborate justifications of efforts to prevent a Communist takeover of another country. All Americans, they thought, recognized that Communism is an evil social system, and hence could be expected to back this latest episode in the struggle to contain it.

The internal conflict which developed in the U. S. over the war illustrates the phenomenon of the generation gap as well as any event that can be presented. For youth, the new generations of college students, the past evils of Stalinism, constitute events which have little relevance to the immediate present. European Communism no longer can be identified with Stalinist oppression, with the slaughter of the innocents, or with monolithic absolutist power.

Thus, different generations have reacted to a different sense of the nature of, and the political potential of, Communism. Though those who have dictated American policy in the past decade have been aware of the changes in the Communist system as much as the younger people, there can be little doubt that the variations in the reactions of the generations reflect the fact that the older know from personal experience the potential for evil in Communism, while the younger ones only know it as words in the history books. It is perhaps inevitable that they should react quite differently to arguments concerning the need to resist a Communist movement in another country.

The same situation, of course, exists in other countries. It is perhaps most strikingly illustrated in Berlin where until the Berlin Wall, there was considerable support for strong anti-Communist policies among all groups in the city, including the students. The Free University of Berlin, in fact, was founded by refugees from Communism.

But the Berlin Wall was more successful than those who planned it could have expected. They built it in order to prevent people from leaving East Germany. But by so doing, they destroyed the past relationship to, and function of, West Berlin for East Germany. West Berliners, including students, no longer talk to people who have fled Communism. For the Berlin youth Communism exists in a society with which they have little contact, while there are many things wrong with the society in which they live. And the student movement of West Berlin, once primarily concerned with the East, is now mainly concerned with changing the society of West Berlin and West Germany.

Recognition that there are generational differences in outlook is not simply relevant to an analysis of any given contemporary scene. For the most important thing about generations is that they persist. Consequently, any effort to evaluate the consequences of the present political revival of student militancy must include a consideration of its potential impact on future events. Some years ago a Japanese opinion study of the attitudes and political beliefs of younger members of the Japanese business executive stratum, those under forty, revealed that the majority of such executives voted for the Japanese Socialist Party, that is, the pro-Marxist relatively radical one. Seemingly, the majority of Japanese youth who go to university, particularly in the better ones, become supporters of some brand of Marxism or radicalism. This remains true, even after most of them go to work for bureaucratic industry or government, entering ladders which can lead them fairly high up into the Japanese elite.

The Japanese data bear directly on the maxim that has been frequently expressed in different countries: "He who is not a radical at

twenty does not have a heart; he who is still a radical at forty does
not have a head." This statement expresses a generally expressed
consensus that youth may be irresponsible and radical, but as they get
older they become more responsible and conservative. There can be
little doubt that there is considerable validity to this generalization.
The Japanese data, however, indicate that although most Japanese young
radicals become more moderate in their opinions and their actions
as they get older, many of those who become business executives remain
on the left politically, adhering to various doctrines of socialism
and, in the Japanese context, anti-Americanism.

   Assuming this study is accurate, it suggests that Japan may be
moving into a period in which it will have an elite which does not
believe in the system which it operates. This more radical elite may
not do anything to change the system, but their beliefs may affect the
way they react toward radical pressure on them from other groups,
as well as their view of new issues as they occur. In a history of
Czarist Russia, written in 1910, Bernard Pares devoted about 200 pages
to the political activities of the intellectuals and students of the
Czarist empire. He discussed in great detail the fact that the students
were radical and anti-regime. Pares, however, then stated that these
activities didn't mean very much, since the students after graduating
went to work for the bureaucracy or entered other sections of the elite
and thus became supporters of the system. There is little data on what
former Russian radical students did in later years, but clearly there
is a good possibility that there is some relationship between the radi-
calism of the Russian students and the weakness of the elite in 1917.

Currently, in the United States, a more radicalized student gener-
ation is gradually moving into the lower and sometimes even the upper
rungs of important parts of the society. For example, in the univer-
sity, in journalism, in other aspects of the communications industry,
and in various government agenices, observers have noted that the youth-
ful members of the staffs tend to be much more radical in their reaction
to the functions of the organization than older hands. As in Japan,
it is probable that many of them retain important parts of the
opinions which they formed as students. In spite of the coercive
pressures on them to conform which come from participation in the
bureaucracy, many aspects of their environment will continue to support
their youthful opinions. It is likely, therefore, that the current
generation of radical university students will continue to affect the
larger body politic in many countries ten, twenty, or even thirty
years from now. Their elites will contain a much larger proportion
of liberals or leftists than they now do. They will also include many
whose image of the United States and its role in the world will be
quite different from that of earlier generations.

As another illustration of this process, it may be noted that some
analysts of the contemporary American university scene have argued
that one of the factors contributing to increased student activism today
is the presence on university faculties of many whose political attitudes
were formed during the New Deal experience, the Depression, or the
struggle against fascism. University faculties are much more liberal
or even leftist than they ever have been in the past. It is noticeable
that a visibly significant number of senior American university faculties

today are individuals who took part in student movements, liberal and
radical politics, during the thirties and early forties. Research
studies suggest that the current generation of student activists are
literally the children of people who were active in radical movements
in the earlier period. Kenneth Keniston has spoken of "the Red diaper
babies." In a sense, these studies indicate that generations sometimes
may even appear twice, first in their own right, and second through
their influence over their children who are given a set of ideals which
they then try to activate, ideals, which stem back to the conditions of
their parents' formative political years.

This discussion of the impact of the early political experience of
youth on their subsequent behavior as adults is not designed to challenge
the assumption that as people mature, get involved in complex experiences,
take on assorted responsibilities, they adjust their beliefs. Clearly
the image that youth adhere to an ethic of absolute ends, while older
generations adhere to the ethic of responsibility, would appear to be
a valid one. The conflict of the generations is not simply or even
primarily a conflict among generations that have had different formative
experiences, it is also a conflict between the young and the older.
Nevertheless, one must recognize the existence of specific generations
which have different long-term impacts. The concept of the generation,
therefore, is not only valuable for historians seeking to explain
what happened, but for anyone seeking to predict what will happen.

No society should find it remarkable that a segment of its student
population should be involved in activist student politics that is
directed militantly against the status quo. It can be strongly argued,
as C. Wright Mills did, that students are the one group who will continue

to supply recruits for such causes, even when no other stratum is available.

A completely inactive student body is a much more curious phenomenon

historically than one which is involved to some degree in activism.

Any efforts to analyze the future of politics, whether on the domestic

or international scene, will ignore the students at the peril of being

in error.